

**Draft Minutes from the Meeting of the
Asheville Area Riverfront Redevelopment Commission (AARRC)
September 9, 2010 5:30 pm
Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce Board Room (2nd floor)**

Members attending: Ben Teague, Robert Griffin, Robert Camille, Patti Torno, Miller Williams, Karl Koon, Denise Snodgrass, Bill Stanley
Members absent: Jan Davis, Jerry Sternberg, Ricky Silver, Joe Ferikes, Jerry Vehaun
Asheville City Staff attending: Riverfront Coordinator Stephanie Monson, Urban Planner Nathan Pennington, RiverArts District TIP Project Manager Dan Baechtold
Guest at the meeting (used sign in sheet): Rick Tipton, NCDOT; Stephanie Pankiewicz, Land Design; Terry Snow, Wilbur Smith;

Chairman Robert Camille Opened the Meeting at 5:30 pm

MINUTES

Robert Camille made a motion to adopt the minutes, amended to reflect the correct date and attendance, of the August 12th 2010 regular meeting. Patti Torno seconded and all voted in favor (motion passed).

UPDATES/OLD BUSINESS

Organizational Items

By laws subcommittee- Torno presented the AARRC bylaws as recommended by the bylaws subcommittee (now the rules subcommittee). Snodgrass asked for clarification on the attendance section: would the 75% requirement count- for example- if the Commission member had only been a member for three months and had missed one meeting? Torno replied “no”, and clarified that attendance would generally be for a one year period, additionally, that Commission members were able to get “excused” absences, as it would be nearly impossible to make every meeting.

Annual Retreat

Monson noted that the minutes/report from the Annual Retreat held on August 28 would be sent to AARRC members before the next meeting in October.

Subcommittee Updates

- Finance- committee chair Ben Teague relayed that they would be meeting on September 15th at Miller Williams office
- Planning – committee chair Robert Griffin relayed that they would be setting their meeting date after tonights meeting. City of Asheville Planner Nate Pennington was introduced, he will join Monson in providing staff resource to this planning subcommittee of the Commission; Nate staffs the City’s
- Development – committee chair Patti Torno relayed that they had already had one productive meeting, and would meet again soon. She handed out a report of their meeting that described attendance and work completed: the group focused mostly on potential partners, role of the committee, information that can be derived from maps, and finding or exploring a useful web presence for the AARRC’s work. The next subcommittee meeting will focus on maps that will be provided by Buncombe County through their GIS department.

NEW BUSINESS

Informational Presentations

River Arts District Transportation Improvement Project- Preliminary Engineering for a 2.2 mile section of the Wilma Dykeman RiverWay Master Plan Area

The Project team was introduced: Dan Baechtold from the City of Asheville, Stephanie Pankiewicz from Land Design, and Terry Snow from Wilbur Smith. The team provided an in depth overview of the project, from inception until now, and described the opportunities for the Commission members to participate in the process. The team clarified that the work from the project would result in an approved NEPA statement and a preferred alternative for this section of the RiverWay. Next steps (unfunded) would include the development of 80% plus construction drawings. *The Commission discussed the need to work with NCDOT on getting the entirety of the Wilma Dykeman RiverWay prioritized higher on the TIP and to find/allocate funding dedicated for construction.*

NCDOT projects in the Riverfront District

Rick Tipton, a Division Engineer with NCDOT discussed transportation projects in the district, specifically I-26 Connector. Officially the DOT is wrapping up the draft EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) process for the project. At the same time, the recent "Loop Prioritization Process" scored I -26 at the near bottom of almost thirty projects, and this basically means the project is unfunded. Commission members asked if the project being categorized as a loop project, which it arguably is not, affected its financial viability; and did the project have an opportunity to be reclassified. Tipton noted that this was something he did not know, and could note that there are additional issues, such as that the connector would be projected to cost 4-600 million dollars regardless, and that funding isn't there. Tipton discussed the concept of equity funds with the members, and noted that all DOT project schedules are being reviewed right now, it is likely that DOT will be adjusting workplans and dates and identifying how to "pause" each project appropriately. Commission members had the following questions and comments:

Whether Appalachian Regional Highway Funds would be available in this area?

How can the AARRC work with the DOT to ensure air rights for development around bridges/structures?

Why are NCDOT projects not identified on Swannanoa River Road if the WDRWMP calls for two one way pairs, a new bridge, a greenway, etc?

Can the DOT help the community clean up and reopen the pedestrian bridge across I-240 from Hillcrest Housing Site to WECAN/River Arts District?

What is going on with the (water or) sewer line somehow in the sidewalk of the new Biltmore Bridge/hope that is temporary?

How do we encourage that projects get done?

Tipton, in response to a question, recommended that the Commission should work closely with the MPO if they were looking for effective participation in the transportation process. Tipton and AARRC staff will follow up on these questions.

COMMISSION COMMENTS

Members briefly discussed whether a 4th subcommittee needed to be created to focus solely on transportation/work with the MPO; and/or if that work could be done in conjunction with long term planning; currently the development subcommittee is researching partnerships and will likely make a recommendation on the relationship/partnership with the MPO and/or NCDOT.

Meeting Adjourned.